

January 2007

Americans' Views on Health Care Policy



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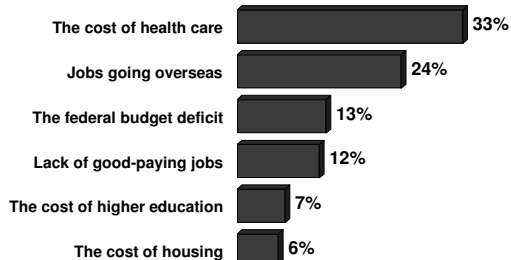
Current Attitudes

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Our national polling demonstrates that health care is “breaking out” at several levels. For example, just last week:

Element of Economy Most Concerned About



Data from NBC News/Wall Street Journal Survey, January 2007

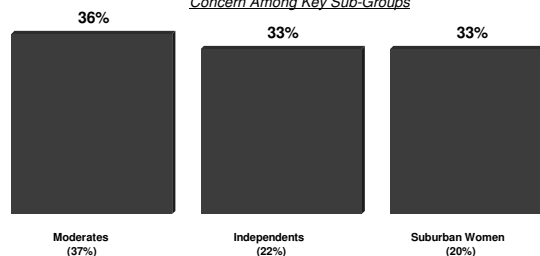
Which ONE of the following elements of the economy, if any, causes you the most concern?

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Voters who focused on health care costs are the types of voters, to whom elected officials MUST pay attention.

Cost of Health Care As Element of Economy Which Causes Most Concern Among Key Sub-Groups



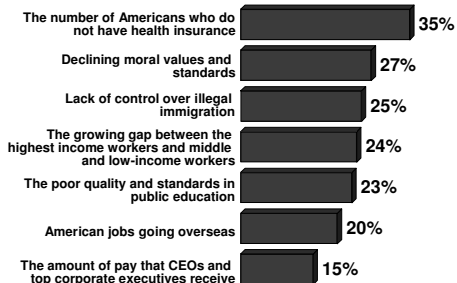
Cost of Health Care
Data from NBC News/Wall Street Journal Survey, January 2007

Which ONE of the following elements of the economy, if any, causes you the most concern?

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And, voters find it disturbing that in the richest nation in the world, people are falling through the cracks.



Next, I'm going to list several things that people have mentioned that disturb them about what is happening in America. Please tell me which one or two of these things, if any, disturb you the most.

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In terms of issues of *personal* importance, Americans say health care is the issue of most concern. This is higher than even concerns about the situation in Iraq.

% Extremely/Very Important

Health Care 84%

Situation in Iraq 81%

Data from an IPSOS Public Affairs poll conducted Jan 18-18, 2007 among 1,005 adults.

How important are each of the following issues to you personally? For each issue, please tell me if it is extremely important, very important, moderately important, slightly important, or not at all important to you personally.

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We need to look no further than the Governors' 2007 State of the State Addresses to see just how important the health care issue is at the state level, as well.

Health care proposal trends:

- Provide more coverage to the uninsured by increasing access and lowering overall health care costs
- Continue funding and expand access to Medicaid programs
- Fund and expand SCHIP
- Focus more on prevention, wellness and early diagnosis
- Increase incentives for physicians and nurses to attract and keep them in state
- Increase the number of children getting immunizations/vaccines
- Implement online health records systems and technology initiatives
- Increase funding for stem cell research
- Reform state employee health benefits

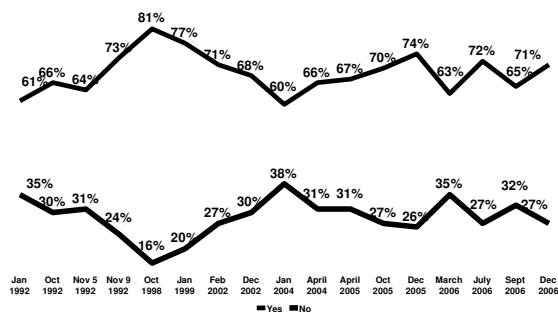
26 of 32 State of State addresses given thus far have included health care initiatives.

* This document includes initiatives from State of the State addresses from the following states: AK, AZ, CA, CO, DE, GA, HI, IN, IA, KS, MN, MO, MT, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NV, ND, SC, SD, UT, VA, WA, WV, WY

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Most Americans believe the health care system is meeting their own needs.



Just generally speaking, is the current health care system meeting the needs of you and your family?

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Insurance status drives this data:

% Voters	Insurance status	% Not Meet Needs
77%	Covered for last three years or more	21%
11%	Covered now, lacked insurance at sometime in last three years	45%
6%	Not covered now, had insurance in last three years	54%
5%	No coverage for last three years or more	54%

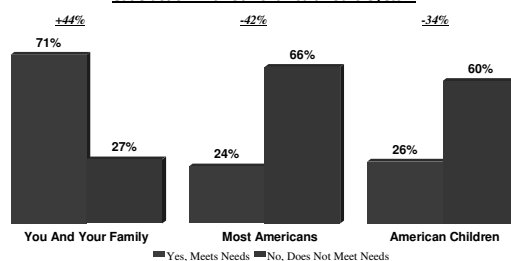
Data from a survey of 800 voters conducted December 19-21, 2006.

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While satisfied with how the health care system meets their own personal needs, voters do believe the health care system is failing other Americans, including children.

Satisfaction With Current Health Care System

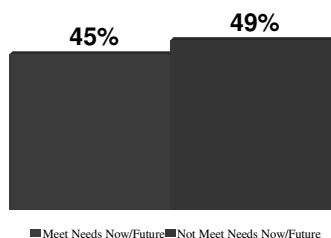


Generally speaking, is the current health care system meeting the needs of you and your family/most Americans/American children?

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Here is what is elevating health care as an issue of concern. Americans are worried about the future – 45% believe the system is not meeting their needs today OR that it will not meet their needs in the next 3-5 years.



Generally speaking, is the current health care system meeting the needs of you and your family? And, thinking ahead... over the next three to five years do you believe the health care system will continue to meet the needs of you and your family?

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Health care is morphing into a security issue. Most now view health insurance as a privilege and not a guarantee.

Having health insurance is no longer something you can count on having if you are working full time.

	Strongly Agree	Total Agree
All Voters	45%	67%
Vulnerable Voters*	54%	71%

Data from a national survey of 800 voters and 418 "vulnerable voters" conducted in December 2005.

*Vulnerable Voters are defined as respondents age 18-64, who do not have health care coverage now, but had it in the last three years, or who have health care coverage now and are in danger of losing coverage in the next year or were without coverage at some point in the last three years.

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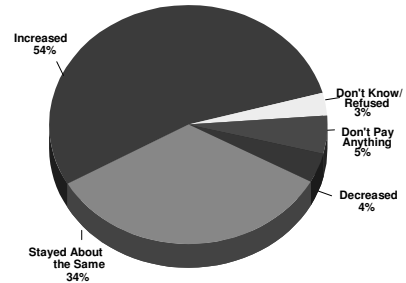
Health Care Costs

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Most respondents under age 65 with health care coverage say there has been an increase in the amount they pay for their premiums.

March 2006



And in the last year, has the amount YOU pay of your health insurance premium...

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Voters are focused squarely on costs

- People feel it every day in terms of what they are paying for their premiums and increasing out-of-pocket costs. They do not believe the current trends are sustainable and want action.
- Costs have become a "me first" issue. Yes, they are concerned about seniors' medicines. Yes, they want a safety net for the uninsured. BUT, they first and foremost want to know what is being done to make THEIR care more affordable.
- As well, no one believes progress will be made on the issue of the uninsured until health care costs are contained.

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Americans agree the cost of insurance is unreasonable, as is the cost of brand name drugs and hospital charges.

	Reasonable	Unreasonable	Net Diff
Generic prescription drugs	76%	20%	+56%
Physician fees	35%	59%	-24%
Health insurance premiums	24%	70%	-46%
Nursing home charges	17%	63%	-46%
Brand name prescription drugs	13%	83%	-70%
Hospital charges	10%	86%	-76%

Data from the November 9-19, 2006 Kaiser Family Foundation poll.

Compared to other goods and services you purchase, how reasonable or unreasonable do you think the prices of the following items are?

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And, more than three-quarters believe Congress **should** do something about the unreasonable cost of health insurance and other health care services.

*Congress Should Do Something About
Unreasonably Priced Health Care Service*

Yes 77%

Data from the November 9-19, 2006 Kaiser Family Foundation poll.

Do you think Congress should try to do something about the items you think are unreasonably priced, or is that NOT something Congress should do?

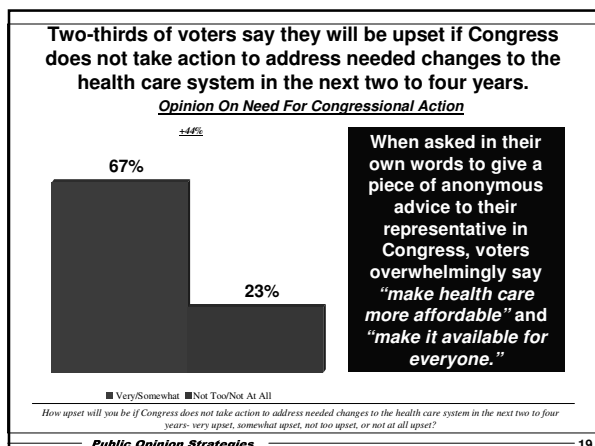
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Goals for Reform

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When asked which goals would be most important in reforming the health care system, making health care more affordable and providing basic coverage for everyone clearly rise to the top.

	% Most Important
Making health care more affordable	40%
Providing basic health care coverage for everyone	31%
Focusing more on prevention and diagnosis	9%
People can select doctor or hospital	8%
Maintain high quality of American health care	7%
Develop and adopt new medical technologies	3%

Now, here are SIX goals that could be followed in changing our health care system. Which one of the following goals is most important for the country and should receive the greatest attention in reforming our health care system?

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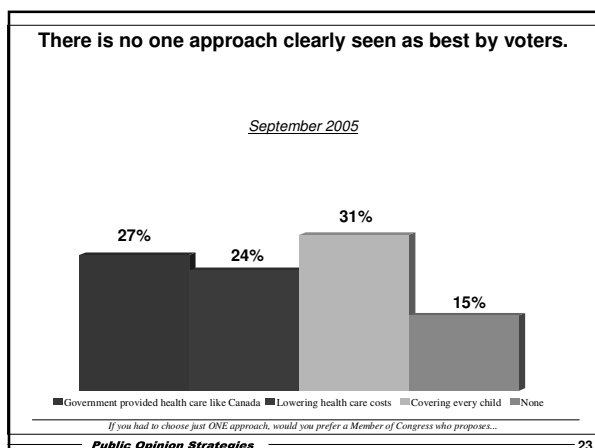
Now, thinking about some current health care issues and proposals...

If you had to choose just ONE approach, would you prefer a Member of Congress who proposes:

- Replacing the private health care system with government provided health care like they have in Canada.
- Lowering health care costs, not creating costly new government programs.
- Covering every child and providing more tax incentives to help individuals and small businesses afford coverage.

OR, do none of these describe what you think?

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But, this is a false choice!

When we force people into this policy situation, their rationales for each choice demonstrate the overlap. Those who support moving to a *universal coverage* system like in Canada cite three core reasons:

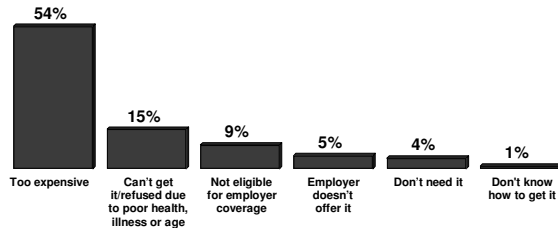
- ✓ Everyone should have health coverage/should be a right and not a commodity;
- ✓ The system is broken because it costs too much; and
- ✓ Would help with doctors fees/drug costs.

Those who prefer to focus on *lowering costs* and not new government programs cite:

- ✓ Too many people cannot afford coverage;
- ✓ Caps on providers fees/drug costs/lawsuit awards would be effective; and
- ✓ Do not want increased taxes/increase government regulation.

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In fact, the uninsured cite cost as the chief factor for not having insurance.



Data from Health Care in America 2006 Survey, ABC News/Kaiser Family Foundation/USA Today October 2006

What's the main reason you do not currently have health insurance?

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Voters were asked: "Now, I would like you to consider the importance of some current issues. Using a ten point scale with ten being VERY IMPORTANT and one being NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL, please tell me how important each issue is to you personally... Although many of these issues may be important to you, please try to rate them according to what is MOST important to you personally."

Issue Statement	% "10"	% "8-10"
Making sure seniors receive affordable prescription drug coverage.*	54%	79%
Guaranteeing all children in the U.S. have access to affordable basic health care coverage.**	53%	78%
Guaranteeing everyone in the U.S. has access to affordable basic health care coverage.*	53%	77%
Protecting Social Security.	51%	77%
Combating terrorism at home in the United States and overseas.	50%	75%
Improving the quality of public education.	47%	75%
Making sure all Americans have access to preventative care services, such as immunizations, cancer screening, and tests for diabetes and high cholesterol.**	43%	75%
Improving the economy and creating good paying jobs.	42%	71%
Helping control the amount you pay out of pocket for your health care costs.*	40%	70%
Making sure patients can choose their own doctors.*	40%	66%
Dealing with the situation in Iraq.	40%	66%
Securing our borders and addressing the issue of illegal immigration.	37%	60%
Requiring Medicare and other insurers to cover the costs of coordinating the complicated medical care of people with chronic health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes.**	34%	62%
Helping control the out-of-pocket costs that patients pay for premiums, deductibles and co-pays.**	32%	60%
Making changes to the medical liability system to hold down the costs doctors have to pay for malpractice insurance.	26%	51%
Increasing access to online medical information and records for patients and healthcare providers. This would mean a reduction in medical errors and would also give patients information on the quality of care delivered by different physicians and hospitals.	23%	48%

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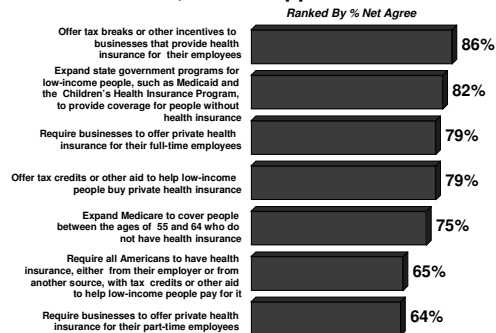
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Tension arises for specific reforms

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At first blush, voters support lots of reforms.



Data from Health Care in America 2006 Survey, ABC News/Kaiser Family Foundation/USA Today October 2006

Do you think the government should or should not (ITEM)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

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Even including a switch to nationalized care.

Which would you prefer – the current health insurance system in the United States, in which most people get their health insurance from private employers, but some people have no insurance; or a universal health insurance program, in which everyone is covered under a program like Medicare that's run by the government and financed by taxpayers?

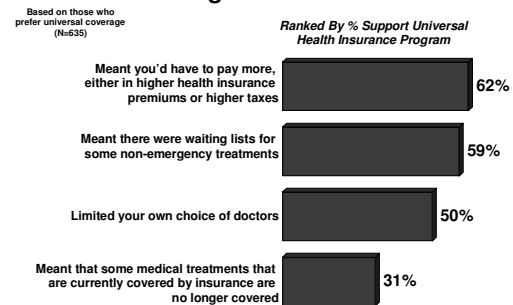
40%
Current
56%
Universal

Data from Health Care in America 2006 Survey, ABC News/Kaiser Family Foundation/USA Today October 2006

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But look how quickly support peels away after hearing a few trade-offs.



Data from Health Care in America 2006 Survey, ABC News/Kaiser Family Foundation/USA Today October 2006

Would you support or oppose a universal health insurance program if it (ITEM)?

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Voters are split on the Massachusetts and California health care proposals.

Within the past year, the governors of Massachusetts and California have put forward plans to require all residents in their states to have health insurance coverage.

For example, the plan in Massachusetts would require residents with higher incomes to pay for coverage and state funding that would be used to help cover residents with lower incomes. Do you think it is a good idea or bad idea to do this for the entire country?

48%
Good Idea
42%
Bad Idea

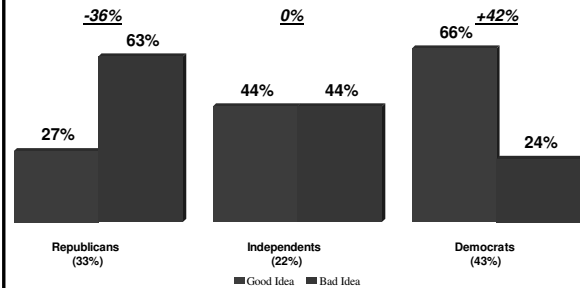
Data from NBC News/Wall Street Journal Survey, January 2007

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There are huge divisions by party.

Massachusetts Required Health Insurance By Party



Data from NBC News/Wall Street Journal Survey, January 2007

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And, voters are not at the point of personal sacrifice to fix the problems in the health care system.

% Agree Over Time

Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement.

"I would be willing to pay higher taxes so that everyone can have health insurance."

June 1991 47%
March 1993 66%
January 2007 53%

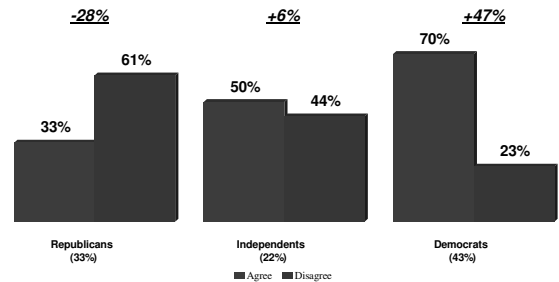
Data from NBC News/Wall Street Journal Survey, January 2007

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There are massive partisan distinctions on this again.

Higher Taxes So Everyone Can Be Insured By Party



Data from NBC News/Wall Street Journal Survey, January 2007

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Cost is not the only trade-off voters are concerned about. Witness the ambivalence displayed over more government intervention to reduce the numbers of uninsured.

Trade off?

Have more government involvement in managing the health care system.

Trade off is:	%
Necessary	51%
Not Necessary	45%
Acceptable	45%
Not Acceptable	52%

Data from a survey of 800 likely voters conducted September/October, 2005.

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Health Care in the Context of a Democratic Majority & the 2008 Campaign

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In this Congress we should be hearing about:

- ✓ **Allowing the government to negotiate drug prices in Medicare Part D;**
- ✓ **SCHIP;**
- ✓ **Hospital charges and collections;**
- ✓ **Anti-PhRMA rhetoric and action; but,**
- ✓ **Less policy change than you might imagine.**



In the 2008 campaign we should be hearing about:

- ✓ **Major coverage initiatives proposed by the candidates in the Democratic primary;**
- ✓ **Emerging consensus regarding covering kids first;**
- ✓ **Stem cell research; and,**
- ✓ **Significant discussion regarding the cost of health care.**



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